

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation of the Action Plan Team: CORE Mission

State of Issue #: 3.9

Recommendation #R-8

Summary: Establish cross-divisional teams within USFA.

Recommendation: Reorganize the U. S. Fire Administration, utilizing Teams.

Background: On January 29, 1998, 13 faculty members of the National Fire Academy submitted a White Paper to the NFA Board of Visitors that reflected many fire community long held concerns about the relative status of the USFA and NFA within FEMA.

The White Paper was critical of NFA, USFA and FEMA, stating that resources were not adequate to enable the Federal Fire Programs to accomplish it's mission.

A meeting with leaders of the fire service community subsequently led Director Witt to convene a review panel to develop options on the delivery of future USFA and NFA services and programs. A Blue Ribbon Panel, consisting of representatives of 13 fire service organizations, submitted its findings to Director Witt on October 1, 1998.

The Blue Ribbon Panel report was highly critical of FEMA and USFA, stating that "there is in effect a broken covenant between the federal fire programs and the people and institutions they were created to serve." The Panel found three core deficiencies that they claim were undermining USFA's effectiveness: leadership, resource management, and communication.

To address the findings, the Panel made 34 recommendations, calling for more effective leadership and management, and an enhanced status of USFA within FEMA's organizational structure.

As a result of the findings in the Blue Ribbon Panel report, Director Witt appointed Richard Marinucci, as a senior advisor, and later as Acting Chief Operating Officer (COO), to work directly with the USFA to guide the efforts to implement the key recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel report.

All of the recommendations are being addressed by the USFA Teams and many have been implemented. Those recommendations remaining are at various stages of being reviewed.

Blue Ribbon Panel Report

The reorganization takes into account the recommendations contained in the Blue Ribbon Panel Report of October 1998. Specific recommendations are as follows:

Recommendations #3 - Reporting relationships be redefined so that “working relationships can be improved in terms of empowerment, delegation of authority and accountability.”

Recommendation #8 – USFA should focus on a number of critical tasks identified in Public Law 93-498, which are as important today as they were in 1974 and still have not been fully addressed.

Recommendation #22 – Staffing levels at the NFA be established at the appropriate level, through the adoption of the budget recommendations made in this report, and in a separate study regarding NFA.

Recommendation #24 – Staff at the USFA develop a decision making model which is well integrated throughout the Fire Administration.

USFA Action Plan

As part of a commitment to revitalize the USFA, a group of six nationally recognized fire service professionals (Action Plan Working Group), met to assist the Acting COO in drafting an action plan for the USFA. The goal of the Action Plan Working Group was to provide recommendations to guide the USFA toward its goal of becoming a world-class organization. The recommendations of the working group are contained in the USFA Action Plan, dated November 1999.

This Group was convened after careful consideration of the most effective means of devising a flexible yet strong guiding document for the USFA.

The major facets of the plan address the core mission, leadership, communication, staff development, advocacy, partnership, and marketing. Success in these areas will set the standard for all Federal Fire Programs and directly influence services at the state and local level. The Working Group looked to develop leadership and advocacy within the USFA so that the changes begun by the Blue Ribbon Panel would continue and be institutionalized.

This Action Plan is not a traditional one in that it does not cover monetary recommendations or discuss profit-making initiatives. If followed, and the increase in resources to accomplish our mission is supported by FEMA, the plan will help re-

establish the USFA as the leader in fire prevention, training, education and research initiatives. The plan will also help create an organization that is better able to react quickly, lead the fire service in recognizing and addressing new issues as they arise, and to demonstrate creative and innovative problem solving skills.

The USFA has adopted a new mission statement that clearly defines the USFA as the umbrella organization of the National Fire Academy, management and technology activities and logistical support.

The reorganization takes into account the recommendations contained in the USFA Action Plan of November 1999, to “develop strong organizational linkage (communication/coordination) between and among USFA components.” Specific references in the Action Plan are as follows:

- Establish cross-divisional teams within USFA.
- Use committees or teams to better develop curriculum
- Increase staffing at the USFA to meet current program demands to assist states with the implementation of the latest version of NFIRS. Future staffing increases should be commensurate with the growth of participation in the NFIRS system.
- There is a widely stated concern by fire service community, FEMA, and USFA staff that the leadership within USFA needs strengthening.
- Poor morale also exists in many segments of the USFA workforce. There is a lack of sense of purpose/mission/vision. Documents such as the White Paper, A Campaign for a Stronger USFA, The Blue Ribbon Report, and this committee among others identified a lack of leadership as a significant issue in strengthening the future of the USFA.
- Develop an organizational plan that establishes training opportunities for appropriate staff positions.
- Develop a plan to create an environment that promotes cooperation, teamwork, creativity and innovation.
- Horizontal and vertical communications between the various elements within the USFA do not adequately provide for effective internal and external coordination. There is also the perception of compartmentalization within the USFA is creating gaps in communications about productivity, information exchange, and priorities that result in inefficiencies and ineffectiveness. As a result, divisions appear to be operating in a manner that impedes the sharing of information between divisions. (Anecdotal examples include; missed opportunities for fully funded development of badly needed courses, duplication of effort in development of customer products, etc.). In addition, there is some evidence of little or no interaction or

response within the USFA in areas where the fire service interest is obvious to the customers (e.g., terrorism).

- There is no uniform information-sharing process that provides status updates and promotes teamwork within USFA. The behavior of the organization does not reflect that all personnel subscribe to the USFA mission. There have been five major reorganizations in the last ten years. Previous reorganizations, by themselves, have not resulted in improving communication and closing performance gaps.
- Develop strong organizational linkage
- Develop strong organizational linkage communication/coordination) between and among USFA components. (Refer to the COO's Reorganizational Task Force)
- The USFA shall take advantage of its own organizational development staff to conduct and facilitate staff development activities (e.g., team building, effective project management, etc.).
- Develop and implement a team approach, with the (Program Chair), Training Specialists, as the "project manager".
- Require the integration of development with the delivery process.
- Consultation and interaction with other subject matter experts, both inside and outside the fire service.
- The FEMA/USFA/NFA and the fire service community will need to advocate/support/promote the Action Plan.
- The Chief Operating Officer shall coordinate the efforts/activities of the USFA.
- All USFA products need to emphasize the USFA mission and organizational structure.
- Explore the creation of a foundation for the purpose of enhancing U.S. fire programs.
- Empower employees to be creative and innovative to meet customer requirements.
- Establish cross-divisional teams within USFA.
- Use committees or teams to better develop curriculum.
- Develop a method to further refine and develop the effectiveness of NFA courses.

- Develop a comprehensive management information system that reflects the meaningful activities and components of the USFA.
- Provide appropriate staff dedicated to managing NFIRS marketing.
- Adopt the new mission statement that clearly defines the U. S. Fire Administration as the umbrella organization of the National Fire Academy, management and technology activities and logistical support.
- The Chief Operating Officer must lead the open communications effort across the USFA organization. Examples of this leadership include attending regular FEMA senior staff meetings, providing a written summary of meetings to staff, etc.
- Formalize and document action-planning process to set deadlines and deliverables dates.
- Assign the NFA Superintendent to become the focal point for advocacy of NFA issues.
- The Deputy Superintendent shall be given the temporary responsibility for implementation of those sections of the Action Plan that affects the National Fire Academy under the direction of the Chief Operating Officer.
- The Chief Operating Officer shall coordinate the effort/activities of the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent.
- All USFA products need to emphasize the USFA mission and where the NFA, MOSS and M&T fit into the USFA organization.
- Create and convene partnership groups and establish clear goals and objectives. These partnerships shall address common issues that contribute to the achievement of the USFA mission, and shall aggressively monitor productivity.
- Develop a plan to create an environment that promotes cooperation, teamwork, creativity and innovation.

Other Considerations

- Consider functions and activities and their relationship
- Consider reoccurring establishment of “Teams”
- Minimize Supervisory layering
- Minimize organizational elements
- Keep the USFA Mission Statement visible
- The organizational structure and the functional process of USFA must complement each other

- Accountability and responsibility
- Bumper Sticker language to identify functions of each organizational element
- Minimize redundancy of programmatic, administrative and logistical activities
- Eliminate “stove piping”
- Consider GPRA
- Consider A-76
- Consider FAIR Act

The attached graphics demonstrate how USFA is going to conduct business in the new organizational configuration and what the initial staffing for the new organizational structure looks like.

Once USFA is in the new organizational structure, the staff is going to assess the priorities of the work group they are assigned and the resources available to accomplish the work. The work groups will develop and present, to management, a plan which will focus the efforts of the USFA on the most significant fire problems and monitor and evaluate the impact of the focused efforts based on the new strategic direction of USFA to:

- 1) Reduce by 15% the loss of life due to fires and fire related incidents;
 - 2) Have 2,500 communities with a comprehensive risk-reduction plan led by or including the fire service; and
 - 3) Respond in a timely manner to emergent fire issues.
1. Priority: Implementation of the USFA reorganization effective October 1, 2000.
 2. Step(s) to Achieve:
 - Step 1. New organization structures developed.
 - Step 2. New organization codes and office symbols developed.
 - Step 3. Mission and functions statements written.
 - Step 4. New USFA reorganization package approved by the Director.
 3. Estimated Time Frame:
 - Step 1: Not Later than September 30, 2000
 - Step 2: Not Later than September 30, 2000
 - Step 3: Not Later than September 30, 2000
 - Step 4: Effective September 28, 2000

4. Estimated Cost:

Step 1: None

Step 2: None

Step 3: None

5. Outcome:

The transformation of USFA by establishing cross-divisional teams.

Conclusion:

The Core Mission Team supports the recommendation contained in this Final Recommendation.

Submitted by:

Core Mission Action Plan Team:

Team Leader and Team Members:

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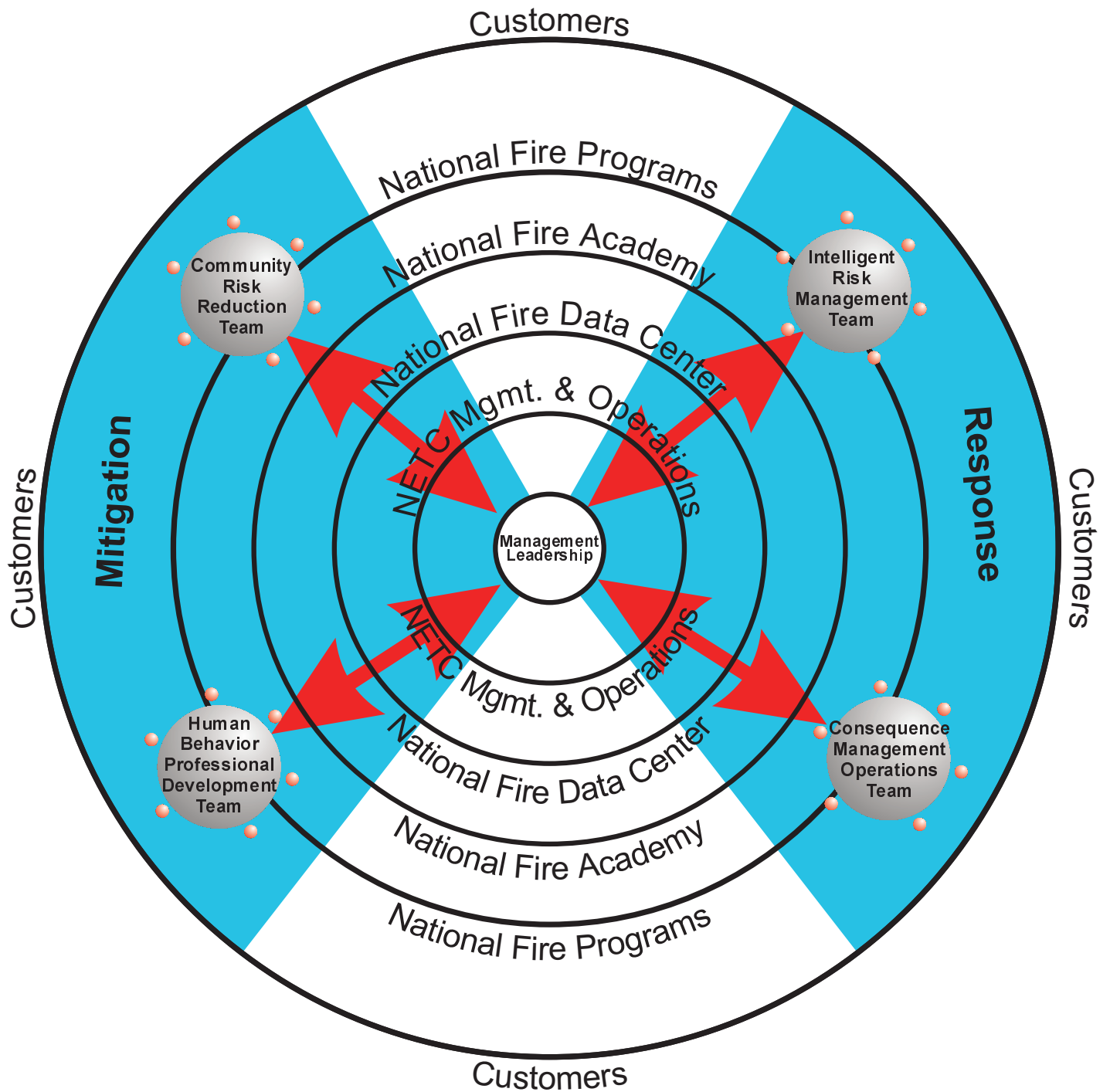
Elsie Davis

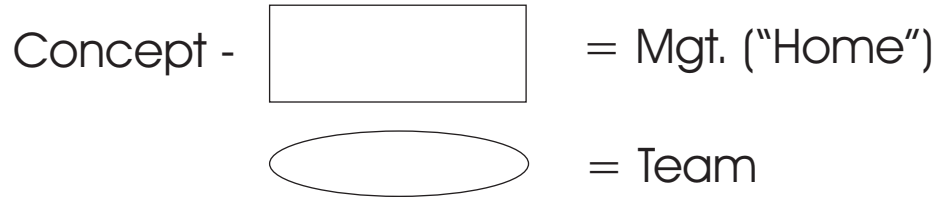
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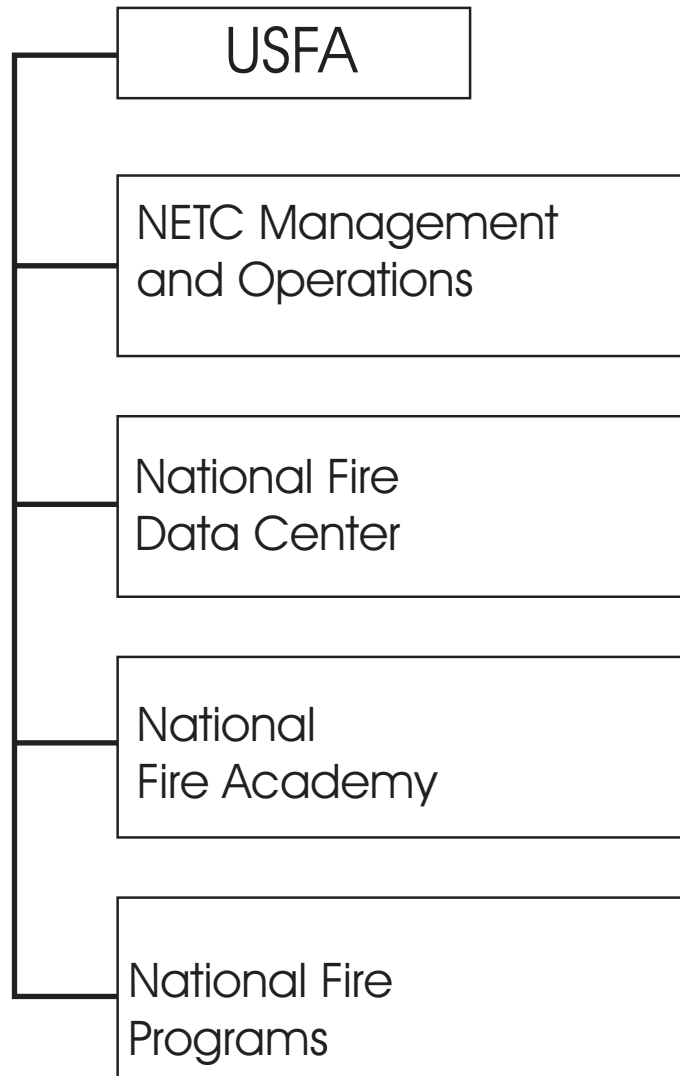
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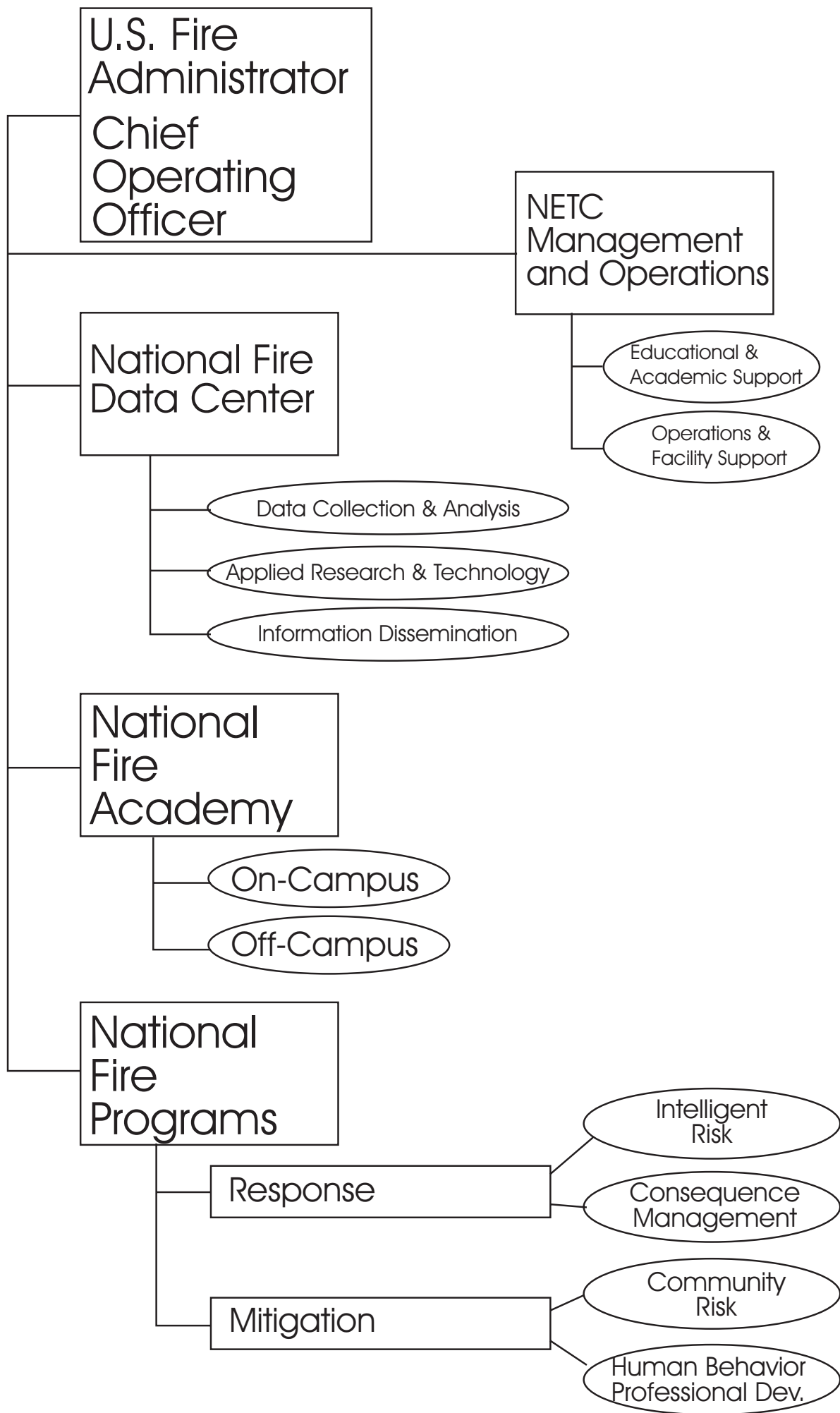




Core Target For Each Program Team Structure

2 or more Fire Program Specialists	GS-11/12/13
2 or more Training/Education Specs.	GS-11/12/13
1 or more Instructional Systems Specs.	GS-11/12/13
1 or more Program Support Specs. (New)	GS-7/9/11
1 or more Program Support Assts.	GS-5/6





U.S. Fire
Administrator

Chief
Operating
Officer

Brown, C. *
Brown, D. *
Megles

Burris
Davis, E.
Walter

NETC Management and Operations

Face/Kaas/Makar Slemmer
Miller/Hall/Baughman/Phelan

Educational and
Academic Support

White
Begg
R. Kemenyas
Vestal
Price
Bare
Sollenberger
Leslie

Operations &
Facility Support

P. Kemenyas
Joy
D'Amico
Topper
Pitotti
Thoma
Mathias
Coshun
(External Affairs)

